

35 The President's News Conference on *January 24, 1963*

THE PRESIDENT. Good afternoon. I have an opening statement.

[1.] It would be well to remind all concerned of the hard and fast realities of this Nation's relationship with Europe—realities of danger, power, and purpose which are too deeply rooted in history and necessity to be either obscured or altered in the long run by personal or even national differences. The reality of danger is that all free men and nations live under the constant threat of the Communist advance. Although presently in some disarray, the Communist apparatus controls more than a billion people, and it daily confronts Europe and the United States with hundreds of missiles, scores of divisions, and the purposes of domination.

The reality of power is that the resources essential to defense against this danger are concentrated overwhelmingly in the nations of the Atlantic Alliance. In unity this alliance has ample strength to hold back the expansion of communism until such time as it loses its force and momentum. Acting alone neither the United States nor Europe could be certain of success and survival. The reality of purpose, therefore, is that that which serves to unite us is right, and what tends to divide us is wrong. The people and Government of the United States over the three past administrations have built their policy on these realities. The same policy has been followed by the people and governments of Europe. If we are to be worthy of our historic trust, we must continue on both sides of the Atlantic to work together in trust.

[2.] Q. Mr. President, as you may be aware, there seems to be some conflict on the part of history involving the Bay of Pigs in-

vasion. As we know, the Attorney General says that no United States air support was contemplated, so therefore there was to be withdrawn. Yet today, *South Florida* of the Fort Lauderdale, Fla., News writes to a group of editors who asked: "May 15, 1961, we told them that air was available, but you had decided not to do it."

Mr. Gore says you told these editors one reason for your decision was that the basis for Stevenson had complained: "such action would make a liar out of the U.N." Now also today, a Mr. M. Penobos, who has been rather vocal the last day or two, a member of Brigade 2506 says that the United States military instructors of that brigade promised the men they could expect air cover. Now, this welter of seemingly different statements—wonder if you can set us straight on what the real situation was?

THE PRESIDENT. Yes. There was no United States air cover planned, so the first part of the statement attributed to the Attorney General, of course, is correct. Obviously, if you're going to have United States air cover, you might as well have a complete United States commitment, which we have meant a full-fledged invasion of the United States. That was not the policy of the United States in April 1961.

What was talked about was the question of an air strike on Monday morning, planes which were flown by pilotless planes which were flown by pilots based in the United States, not American.

That strike, as the Attorney General said in the interview in *U.S. News and World Report*, described it, was postponed until 1962.

afternoon. I think that the members of the brigade were under the impression that the planes which were available, which were the B-26 planes, would give them protection on the beach. That did not work out. That was one of the failures. The jets, the training jets, which were used against them were very effective and, therefore, we were not—the brigade was not able to maintain air supremacy on the beach.

So I think that the confusion comes from the use of the word "air cover," not to talk about United States air cover as opposed to air cover which was attached to the brigade, some of which flew from various parts of this continent, not from the United States. So I think that will make it clear. As I've said from the beginning, the operation was a failure and the responsibility rests with the White House.

We engaged in intensive analysis of the reasons for the failure afterwards, headed by General Taylor, who is now Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In the Congress the Senate Foreign Relations Committee conducted an investigation, and it seemed to me that the conduct of operations in October 1962 indicated that a good many lessons had been learned.

As to the recollection of the editor, there was no such conversation of the kind, at least that has been read to me. The problem of air cover and one of the reasons that the invasion failed may have well been discussed, but only in the terms that I have described, because what I have described are the facts.

[3.] Q. Mr. President, Mr. Gromyko has said that France must sign any nuclear test ban treaty if it is to be meaningful. In view of that, are you still encouraged by the prospects for such a treaty? And also can you tell us what this Government's position now is on whether Communist China should also be a signatory to the treaty?

THE PRESIDENT. Well, I think the first problem is to attempt to negotiate the details of the treaty while these conversations are now going on with the Soviet Union,

the British, and the United States. Then, if we are successful, if we work out a treaty which we believe gives us assurances, which we believe can provide for an end of testing and security for the countries involved, the Senate of the United States accepts it under the constitutional provisions. Then I would hope that other countries would be willing to sign it. If other countries signed it, then, of course, great progress would be made. If other countries did not sign it and began to test, then we would have to make a judgment—and I'm sure that this would be written into the treaty—we would have to make a judgment as to whether this destroyed the treaty, the purpose of the treaty, and that therefore, the treaty was at an end. But I think we ought to go at it one step at a time.

The first step is to see whether the British and the Americans can work out an effective test ban treaty with the Soviet Union. Once that's done, then I think we can move on to these other questions.

[4.] Q. Mr. President, there are new reports of a Soviet military buildup in Cuba. I wonder if there's any truth to this report and if it might pose a threat to our intelligence operation there, our surveillance.

THE PRESIDENT. No, we have been conducting continued surveillance. The best information we have is that one ship has arrived since the October crisis, which may have arms on it, and possibly military cargo. But there has not been a military buildup, in that sense, of equipment coming in from outside of Cuba. There's no evidence that this ship carried any offensive weapons.

Now, on Cuba itself, there are still—we think that probably about 2,500 Soviet technicians who were connected with the offensive weapons were withdrawn after the late October agreement. We figure there are still approximately 16 or 17 thousand Russians there, that the Soviets are continuing to operate the SAM sites and other technical pieces of equipment, and there are some organized units, the same organized units we've described before, which are still on the territory of Cuba. They are exercising,

building some barracks. That is the kind of activity which is going on. There is no influx of military equipment, other than the ship. And, as I say, our scrutiny of Cuba is daily.

[5.] Q. Mr. President, do you have any plans to go to the Congress to ask for a revision of the foreign aid treatment to Yugoslavia and Poland, an alteration of the most-favored-nation clause?

THE PRESIDENT. Yes, I would hope that the Congress would reconsider the action it took last year in connection with the trade bill. We are in a very changing period in the world, in fact in all parts of the world, behind the Iron Curtain and indeed on this side of the Iron Curtain. To take legislative action which denies us an opportunity to exploit or to develop whatever differences in attitude or in tempo which may take place behind the Iron Curtain seems to me to be unwise. Once the Congress takes its action, that legislation exists for 2, 5, or 10 years. The situation during that period of time may change.

Now, I believe that we would be better off if we had—if the President, whoever he was, was given the option of extending the most-favored-nation treatment to Poland and Yugoslavia. The trade really is better in this case than aid, and we could then make a determination, based on the situation in both of those countries, whether the most-favored-nation privileges should be granted.

I'm not suggesting that in every case they should be. I'm not suggesting that in some cases they shouldn't be removed. But I do think that it should be a weapon in the arsenal of the President, with the President reporting to the Congress, the Congress maintaining close scrutiny, and not merely to make a judgment today on events when events may entirely change in the next 12 months. So I will recommend it to the Congress.

[6.] Q. Going back to the Caribbean, sir, would you favor letting the residents of Puerto Rico vote in presidential elections, even though they retained their common-

wealth status, and thus pay no Federal income taxes?

THE PRESIDENT. I hadn't heard that that was a proposal. The proposal that I heard might be put before the voters of Puerto Rico in regard to a commonwealth status did not include the right to vote in presidential elections. If they're going to vote in presidential elections, you raise a question of whether you should be a State, and take on the burdens and the privileges of statehood, so that I'm not prepared to say today that we should extend that particular privilege to Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico has seemed well satisfied with the present arrangement, which gives them a very advantageous position for their own economic and political development.

[7.] Q. In connection with the test ban talks, sir, your science advisers have said that the main issue now is the number of onsite inspections. Do you see any room for compromise between the 3 Mr. Khrushchev has offered and the 8 to 10 that you feel is adequate?

THE PRESIDENT. I think that Mr. Foster is conducting the negotiations, and would be able to conduct them better probably if he developed the American position as time goes on, rather than attempting to develop it here at this time, when the negotiations are still in process. There is not only the question of the onsite inspections, but the location and the number of the automatic devices, and all this has to be meshed in, kinds of inspection, how free the inspectors will be, there are all questions which really ought to be negotiated at the table.

Q. Could you tell us, sir, in your own mind you must have seen some hope in the original letter.

THE PRESIDENT. Yes, the fact that the principle of onsite inspection was accepted was very important, and that's the reason that we are participating in these negotiations at the top level to see if we can make a breakthrough here, because I think a breakthrough would be most important. There was an earlier reference by Mr. Lisagor to other

entirely beginning to test. They might have the wrong reputation and therefore we will have interested in keeping them going, to make them successful. But I think Mr. Foster should determine the American position as time goes on.

[9.] Q. Mr. President, a joint resolution has been offered in Congress to make Sir Winston Churchill an honorary citizen of the United States. I think it has been sponsored by Senators Young and Randolph, and

A. Mr. Foster. I know you took a stand on this, didn't you, but you've never been asked the question as President. What is your sentiment? Your sentiment about honoring Winston Churchill?

THE PRESIDENT. Well, it isn't essential as far as reflecting our regard for him, but I would be delighted if the Congress passed a resolution, whether it's honorary citizenship or an expression of esteem. Some way or other it would be appropriate perhaps to remind Sir Winston Churchill of our regard for him. But it's written very large in any case. This would be a gracious act at this time.

[10.] Q. Mr. President, it has been 34 years since Houston. How do you feel about the Democrats going south again for a national convention, namely, Florida?

THE PRESIDENT. I think it would be fine, but I think it is really a question, once again, that is a negotiation which is extremely intense, being conducted by the National Committee, and involves the amount of—the South is prosperous and perhaps they would be able to compete successfully with Chicago, Philadelphia, and some of the other areas. Geographically, I think it would be very good.

[11.] Q. Mr. President, you have said that you are in favor of the two-term limit to the office of the Presidency. How do you feel about former President Eisenhower's suggestion that the terms of Congressmen also be limited?

THE PRESIDENT. It's the sort of proposal which I may advance in a post-presidential period, but not right now. [Laughter]

[12.] Q. Mr. President, if you have any comment to make on the New York and Cleveland newspaper strikes?

THE PRESIDENT. Yes, I wish that strike would come to an end. It hasn't come under the Taft-Hartley because it's not a national emergency, but it is a hardship on the men involved, and it affects adversely the prosperity of the city, and it affects the abilities of the people, particularly because New York is such a center. I hope it's going to be possible to compromise it. This sort of struggle to see who can stand the pressure the longest may be of interest to one side or the other, but it's hard on those involved, and I would hope that reason would moderate both sides and that they would reach the compromise which ultimately they're going to reach anyway. So I'm hopeful that the two sides will make a judgment that free collective bargaining must be responsible if it's going to be reasonable.

[13.] Q. Mr. President, this has no relation to Skybolt, but are we not putting too many eggs in the Polaris basket if we're going to give Polaris missiles to the north and south of Europe, and doesn't the land mass of Russia and the position of the seas—doesn't that make it very hard to maneuver this Polaris to really hit at the heartland installations in Soviet Russia?

THE PRESIDENT. Well, as you know, we also maintain the Minuteman, which does have a wide range, and Titans, and we still have bombers and still have planes based on Europe itself. If you look at the total arsenal, it's a very, very large one, and I think it gives very, very adequate assurances for the protection of Europe and the United States. We don't rely only on Polaris, even though Polaris is a very, very good weapon.

[14.] Q. Mr. President, when you were Senator, you were very active in efforts to liberalize our immigration laws. Have you any plans to advance this ambition of yours now?

THE PRESIDENT. Yes. We are going to make some proposals in regard to redistributing particularly the unused quotas.

think that day has come yet, but it may come, and we would welcome that. We have no desire to stay in Europe except to participate in the defense of Europe. Once Europe is secure and feels itself secure, then the United States has 400,000 troops there and we would, of course, want to bring them home.

We do not desire to influence or dominate. What we desire to do is to see Europe and the United States together engaged in the struggle in other parts of the world. We cannot possibly survive if Europe and the United States are rich and prosperous and isolated. Now, we're asking that Europe together, united, join in this great effort, and I am hopeful they will, because after all that has been in the object of the policy of, as I have said, a great many Europeans for a great many years. And now, when success is in sight, we don't want to see this great partnership dissolve.

[18.] Q. Mr. President, the Foreign Ministers of Turkey and Italy have announced that some of our missile bases are being withdrawn from their countries. Since these missile bases have often been the target of Soviet wrath, is there any expectation or possibility that there might be return concessions now for those?

THE PRESIDENT. No. We are going to put Polaris submarines in there, a much more modern weapon, in the Mediterranean. We feel that provides a more adequate security. The British are phasing out the Thor missile, a missile which came into existence after the Jupiter, and in favor of the Polaris also. So I think we are going to be in a stronger position.

[19.] Q. Mr. President, the Foreign Minister of Argentina, as you know, is in the United States this week, and it seems to be one of those refreshing cases where we've found a very loyal friend in a very major country down there. I wonder if there is anything you can say about that relationship in view of your discussions with the gentleman here this week?

THE PRESIDENT. The relationship has been good. As you know, the Argentine sent destroyers and air units to the assistance of the United States at the time of the quarantine, which we were very grateful for. There is an International Monetary Fund group down there in Argentina now considering the Argentine's economic problems. We are watching that very closely and we're analyzing—when that study is completed—what we can most usefully do to be of assistance to the Argentine.

[20.] Q. Mr. President, in your long-range defense planning, do you foresee a need for a manned strategic bomber after the current B-52's and B-47's are worn out?

THE PRESIDENT. Yes, there may be—yes, there may be a need. That plane will last through 1970. We are securing, as you know, three B-70's. We have no further plans to develop at this time, but there may be a good many struggles in the globe in the late sixties or early seventies which are not subject to solution by missiles, but which may be more limited war, and where manned bombers may be very useful.

[21.] Q. Mr. President, in view of the expanded powers and functions of the Federal Government, have you thought of establishing a President's Conference of Governors to discuss your mutual plans and problems?

THE PRESIDENT. No. As you know, there is a Governors' Conference that does take resolutions, and we are in liaison with them. As a matter of fact, I met with about 12 or 13 Governors last Saturday morning. But there is not a formal conference under way. But the liaison is very immediate. And, as you know, the United States budget today would be balanced if it were not for the assistance that the United States Government is giving to hard pressed States and local communities.

[22.] Q. Mr. President, there have been published reports that some high placed Republican people have been making overtures to your Secretary of Defense for him to be

their 1968 candidate for President. Mr. President, if you thought that Mr. Mc-Namara were seriously considering these overtures, would you continue him in your Cabinet?

THE PRESIDENT. I have too high a regard for him to launch his candidacy right now. *[Laughter.]*

[23.] Q. According to unofficial estimates, the Federal Government has already spent more than \$4 million on the enforcement of the desegregation orders at the University of Mississippi. To this point, do you consider that effort worth it? And would you consider it to be an effort that had failed if, for some reason, Mr. Meredith had to leave the university during this winter?

THE PRESIDENT. Well, it's not only \$4 million but, of course, two people were killed and a good many were wounded, and it's had wide repercussions and some of them have been unfortunate. However, if the United States Government had failed to exert its influence to protect Mr. Meredith and Mr. Meredith had been denied admission by force, or if he had suffered physical attack, that would have been far more expensive.

This country, of course, cannot survive if the United States Government and the executive branch do not carry out the decisions of the court. It might be a decision in this case which some people may not agree with. The next time it might be another matter, and this Government would unravel very fast. So there's no question in my mind that the United States executive branch had to take the action that it did.

I would be sorry if Mr. Meredith leaves. College is difficult enough under any conditions. He's been subjected to a good deal of harassment, and anyone who has gone through his experience in college would find it difficult to continue. I hope he continues. If he doesn't, that is a loss not only to Mr. Meredith but I think the University of Mississippi.

[24.] Q. Mr. President, the theory was put forward in Europe this week that France

must have its own separate nuclear deterrent because the Europeans cannot be sure that the United States 5 or 10 years from now would defend Europe with as much determination as we acted with during the Cuban crisis, whereas the Europeans could be sure that the French would. How do you answer such reasons?

THE PRESIDENT. Well, actually, wasn't it put more directly than that, that what happened at Cuba proved that the United States might not defend Europe? That is a peculiar logic. If we had not acted in Cuba, that would have proved we would defend Europe? I don't think it would. So that once you accept that as the thesis, whatever we did in Cuba can be used to prove a point. Now the point is that since the Soviet Union developed its own nuclear capacity there is a balance, in a sense, between these two forces and neither will use it, and, therefore, Europe cannot rely on the United States.

Now, there may be reasons for a country to wish a nuclear force of its own, and France has put forward its reasons. But in my judgment, it's inaccurate and not really in the Alliance interest to justify it on the grounds that the United States would fail to defend Europe by whatever means are necessary.

I think the United States over the last 15 years has given—and in fact before that, the last 20 years—has given evidence that its commitments are good. Some in some parts of Europe may not believe that commitment, but I think that Chairman Khrushchev does and I think he's right.

In addition, once you begin to say that the United States will not come to the assistance of "X," can't someone say that perhaps France will not come to the assistance of Germany, and then everyone decides they must rely upon their own deterrent, and pretty soon you have as many deterrents as you have countries.

I think if France wishes to develop its own deterrent, that that's its judgment. It's done so. I have never had the slightest doubt that General de Gaulle would respond to the needs of the alliance. He responded when